

What Is Codex?

The *Codex Alimentarius* Commission (CAC), or Codex, was created in 1962 by two U.N. organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), as an international mechanism for promoting the health and economic interests of consumers while encouraging fair international trade in food.

What Does Codex Do?

The *Codex Alimentarius* Commission provides a forum where member countries and international organizations can meet and exchange information and ideas relative to food safety and trade issues. Its main purpose is to promote consumer protection and to facilitate world trade in foods through the development of food standards, codes of practice and other guidelines. Member countries can review and provide comments at several stages of the development process of a Codex standard. More than 150 countries are members of the CAC.

How Does Codex Do Its Work?

The work of Codex is performed through committees composed of member countries. There are three types of committees:

General subject matter committees, such as Food Hygiene, Pesticide Residues, and Methods of Analysis and Sampling;

Commodity committees, such as Fish and Fishery Products, Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, and Milk and Milk Products;

Regional Coordinating Committees for areas such as Europe, Asia, and North America and the Southwest Pacific.

Each Codex Committee is chaired and hosted by a member government, at the expense of that government. The meetings are normally held in the country of the committee chairperson.

The United States currently chairs four committees: Food Hygiene; Processed Fruits and Vegetables; Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods; and Cereals, Pulses and Legumes (adjourned *sine die*).

How Are Codex Activities Managed In The United States?

The U.S. Codex Manager coordinates all Codex activities within the United States. This involves working closely with U.S. delegates to the various committees, as well as members of Congress, government agencies, non-governmental organizations and members of the public.

The Manager, who reports to the Under Secretary for Food Safety in USDA, is assisted by the U.S. Codex Office, housed in the Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA. Staff from the Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Commerce serve as delegates to Codex committees. Steering committees made up of senior officials from these departments and agencies give direction to the Manager.

How Does Codex Impact You?

U.S. Codex represents the American people in *Codex Alimentarius* efforts to ensure a safe food supply and facilitate the global exchange of food products. Now that the World Trade Organization cites Codex texts as a bench mark in the Agreement on Sanitary and

Phytosanitary Measures (SPS), it is more important than ever that these international food standards be developed based on sound principles of science.

Non-governmental organizations — public interest, industry, and professional groups as well as other interested parties— will play an important role as the United States moves to insure that Codex standards are science based and protect the public health.

How Can You Learn More about Codex?

Here are ways to find out more about Codex:

Visit the U.S. Codex homepage:
<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/codex/>

Contact the U.S. Codex Office via the Internet: USCODEX@usda.gov

Call or FAX the U.S. Codex Office:
(202) 205-7760
(202) 720-3157 FAX

Write to:

U.S. Manager
U.S. Codex Office
FSIS/USDA
Rm. 4861 South Bldg.
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20250-3700



Codex Committees and Host Countries

General subject committees

Codex Committee on Food Hygiene
United States

Codex Committee on Food Import
and Export Certification and Inspection
Australia

Codex Committee on Food
Additives and Contaminants
The Netherlands

Codex Committee on Food Labeling
Canada

Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues
The Netherlands

Codex Committee on Residues
of Veterinary Drugs in Foods
United States

Codex Committee on General Principles
France

Codex Committee on Methods
of Analysis and Sampling
Hungary

Active commodity committees

Codex Committee on Nutrition
and Foods for Special Dietary Uses
Germany

Codex Committee on Processed Fruits
and Vegetables
United States

Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products
Uruguay

Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products
Norway

Codex Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
Mexico

Codex Committee on Fats and Oils
United Kingdom

Codex Committee on Cocoa Products and Chocolate
Switzerland

Codex Committee on Sugars
United Kingdom

Codex Committee on Soups and Broths
Switzerland

Codex Committee on Natural Mineral Waters
Switzerland



Codex Alimentarius Commission

U.S. Codex Office
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service

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